

God bless. Thanks for coming. Thank you all, very much. We're on to victory. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:17 p.m. at Hedgesville High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gale Catlett, former men's basketball coach, University of West Virginia; Don Dellinger, principal, Hedgesville High School; Manny P. Arvon, superintendent, Berkley County Schools; William F. Queen, president, Berkley County Schools Board of Education; entertainers the Belamy Brothers; Col. Muammar Abu Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

Remarks in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. It's great to be here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. What a beautiful day. You know what I think? I think Wisconsin is "W" country. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate this warm hospitality. You know, my opponent said the other day, "You can find the heart and soul in Hollywood." I think you find it right here in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. I'm glad to be with the heart and soul of America.

And I'm here to ask for your vote. I believe if you're seeking the vote, you've got to go ask for it. I'm here to tell you I've got more work to do to make this country safer and stronger and better for every single citizen. And I appreciate you coming out to say hello.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me.

Audience members. Aw-w-w!

The President. No, I know it. She's in Colorado today campaigning. She is a fantastic First Lady, a great mom, and I love her dearly. Listen, I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years.

I'm running with a good man. They call it the Bush-Cheney ticket. I'm proud to be running with Dick Cheney. Now listen, I admit to you, he isn't the prettiest one in the race. [Laughter] I didn't pick him for his looks. [Laughter] I picked him for his judg-

ment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

I appreciate the Kell boys for having us over here, John and Tom. I love to come to places where people are entrepreneurial, where people are willing to expand the job base. That's what it's all about in this country, to elevate the entrepreneurial spirit. And the Kells represent that spirit, and I'm honored that you would have us here.

I appreciate being on the same stage with my friend Congressman Mark Green. He's a good man. Treasurer Jack Voight is with us as well. I appreciate you being here, Jack. I'm honored you're here. I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Doug Sandvick, for being here. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming. My only advice to you, Mr. Mayor, is fill the potholes.

State Senator Dale Schultz, the next Congressman from this part of the world, is with us today. I hope you put him in to the United States Congress. He'll do a fine job for the people of this part of the world. I appreciate all the State and local officials here. I want to thank everybody for organizing this fantastic event.

I know you join me in congratulating the Hamm brothers from the great State of Wisconsin for their performance in the Olympics. I know they made the people of Wisconsin proud. They made this Texan proud too.

Most of all, I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank the grassroots activists who are here, people putting up the signs, the people making the phone calls. I urge you to continue to register people to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. In a free land, people must participate in the elections. So do your duty as grassroots activists and continue to register people. Convince everybody to vote, and when you get them headed to the polls, remind them George Bush and Dick Cheney are willing and ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm traveling your State a lot. And I'm enjoying every minute of it. You know why I'm coming back? We were close last time. With your help, this time we

will carry Wisconsin and have a great victory in November of 2004.

In the past few years, we have been through a lot together, and we've accomplished a great deal. But there's only one reason to look backward at the record, and that is to determine who best to lead us forward. I'm asking for your vote because so much is at stake. I'm asking for your vote because we have so much more to do to move this country forward. We've got more to do to create jobs and improve schools, from fighting terror to spreading the peace. We've made much progress, and we will do more on behalf of the American people.

We got more to do to make our public schools the centers of excellence we all know they can be, so that no child is left behind in America. You might remember what it was like 3½ years ago. We were spending money at the Federal level, but year after year, children were being shuffled from grade to grade without learning the basics. I went to Washington to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations. I wanted to raise the bar. We've increased Federal funding, but now we're asking the question that you expect us to ask: Can our children read and write and add and subtract? And if not, we'll make sure they get help early. We believe in local control of schools. We believe in parental involvement, and we will challenge the status quo when we find schools that will not teach and will not change.

There's more work to be done. We want to have early intervention programs. We want to make sure we intervene in junior high when children can't read and write. We want to make sure we emphasize math and science so our kids have got the capabilities of competing in the 21st century. We want our high school diplomas to mean something. After 4 more years, a rising generation of youngsters will have the skills and the confidence necessary to realize the great promise of the American Dream.

We've got more to do to make sure quality health care is available and affordable. You might remember all the debates of the past, when politician after politician said, "We're going to fix Medicare." And nothing ever got done till we came to town. We got the job done. We have strengthened Medicare.

More than 4 million seniors have signed up for drug discount cards that provide real savings. And beginning in 2006, all seniors on Medicare will be able to choose a plan that suits their needs and gives them coverage for prescription drugs.

There's more to do. We've expanded community health centers to help low-income America—Americans get primary care. We've established what's called health savings accounts so families can save tax-free for their own health care needs. When it comes to working on the issue of costs and availability, we've made progress. There's more work to do be done. You see, most people get their health care through businesses and most small businesses cannot afford health care. And so, therefore, Government must allow small businesses to pool risk so they can afford health insurance for their employees, just like big businesses can.

We'll harness technology to reduce costs and prevent mistakes. We'll expand research to seek new cures. In order to make sure your health care system works, in order to make sure health care is available and affordable, we must have medical liability reform. These frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of health care. See, I don't think you can be pro-doctor and pro-patient and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket. I made my choice. I am for medical liability reform now. And in all we do to improve health care, we will make sure that health care decisions are made by patients and doctors, not by Government bureaucrats.

There's more to do to keep this economy growing. We've been through a lot. Our economy has overcome some mighty obstacles. We've been through a recession. We've been through corporate scandals. We've been through a war and a terrorist attack. And yet, we've overcome those obstacles because the spirit of this country is strong. Our workers are great. Our farmers are really good. The small-business sector is vibrant and alive. And I think one of the reasons we've come through these obstacles is because of well-timed tax cuts.

When we saw what was happening, we acted. We said to the Congress, "Let people

keep more of their own money.” Notice I said more of their own money; I didn’t say Government money. If they have money in Washington, it’s not the Government’s money; it’s your money. And by letting you keep more of your own money, this economy is growing. It’s strong, and it’s getting stronger. Our economy since last summer has grown at a rate as fast as any in nearly 20 years. We’ve added over 1.5 million—nearly 1.5 million new jobs in the past year. The national unemployment rate is 5.5 percent. The unemployment rate in Wisconsin is 5 percent. We’ve done our job. We’ve created the conditions for economic growth, but there is more work to do.

I’m proud of our agricultural agenda. We set out a good agenda for Wisconsin’s and America’s farmers. You know, when I was campaigning, I said these dairy compacts must treat every farmer fairly. When you get people heading to the polls, remind them of what my opponent said. He supported a Northeast dairy compact, which put the farmers in this part of the world at a distinct disadvantage.

I believe there’s more work to do to make sure this economy continues to grow. I want to continue and open up markets. You see, I believe we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the playing field is level. I want people eating Wisconsin corn. I want them eating Wisconsin dairy products. Our farm economy is strong because markets are open to U.S. farm products, and I’ll keep it that way.

There’s more work to be done to make sure people have got work here at home. Listen, to make sure jobs are here, we need a national energy policy that makes us less dependent on foreign sources of energy, energy policy that encourages environmentally sensitive exploration for resources, clean coal technology, renewable sources of energy like biodiesel and ethanol, more conservation. But we must, in order to keep jobs here, have an energy policy. Congress needs to get my plan to my desk for my signature.

In order to make sure jobs are here, we’ve got to have reasonable regulations. Many of you fill out a lot of paperwork. I can’t guarantee anybody in Government has read it. [Laughter] But I do know that in order to

make sure jobs are here, we’ve got to be reasonable about the requests we put on employers. We need tort reform here in America. We need fiscal discipline when it comes to spending your money. We got to be wise about how we spend it, and we must keep your taxes low.

This campaign is getting cranked up. My opponent has already promised over \$2 trillion of new spending, and there’s still 2 more months to go. [Laughter] So I asked him the other day, “How are you going to pay for it?” He said, “Tax the rich.” The problem is, you can’t tax the rich enough to raise \$2 trillion. So guess who’s going to pay? You are. But we’re not going to let him. We’re going to win in November of 2004.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We have more to do to wage and win the war against terror. America’s future depends on our willingness to lead in the world. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This isn’t going to happen on my watch.

The world changed on a terrible September morning, and since that day, we have changed the world. Before September the 11th, Afghanistan served as the home base of Al Qaida, which trained and deployed thousands of killers to set up terror cells around the world, including the United States of America. Because we acted, Afghanistan is a rising democracy. Because we acted, Afghanistan is an ally in the war on terror. And because we acted, many young girls go to school for the first time in their lives. Because we acted, America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, Libya was spending millions to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Today, because America and our allies have sent a strong and easy-to-understand message, the leader of Libya has abandoned his pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and America and the world are safer.

Before September the 11th, the ruler of Iraq was a sworn enemy of America. He was defying the world. He was firing weapons at

American pilots enforcing the world's sanctions. He had used weapons of mass destruction. He harbored terrorists. He invaded his neighbors. He subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He killed tens of thousands of his own citizens. He was a source of great instability in the world's most volatile region. He was a threat. He was a threat.

One of the lessons of September the 11th, a vital lesson of this country that we must never forget, is that we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. I went to the United States Congress to get congressional support. Members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history. Both Republicans and Democrats, including my opponent, came to the same conclusion: Saddam Hussein was a threat.

Listen, the toughest decision a President can ever make is to send citizens into combat. And so I went to the United Nations, hoping to solve this problem diplomatically. I said to the United Nations, "We see a threat." They responded. They looked at the intelligence. They remembered the history. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said Saddam Hussein must disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences.

The world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein defied the world. He wasn't listening to what the world said. As a matter of fact, you might remember, we sent inspectors into Iraq. He systematically deceived the inspectors.

So I had a choice to make: Do I forget the lessons of September the 11th and trust a madman, or take action to defend America? Given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

Even though we didn't find the stockpiles we expected to find, Saddam Hussein had the capability of making weapons, and he could have passed that capability on to our enemies. It's a risk we could not afford to take after the attacks of September the 11th. Knowing what I know today, I would have made the same decision. America and the world are safer because Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell.

Now, almost 2 years after he voted for the war in Iraq and 7 months after switching po-

sitions to declare himself the antiwar candidate, my opponent has found a new nuance. He now agrees it was the right decision to go into Iraq. See, after months of questioning my motives and even my credibility, the Senator from Massachusetts now agrees with me that even though we have not found the stockpiles we all thought we would have found, knowing everything we know today, he would have voted to go into Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein from power. I want to thank him for clearing that up. *[Laughter]* But I want to remind you—I want to remind you, there's still 76 days left in the campaign for him to change his mind. *[Laughter]*

We have more to do. I'm running again because I understand there's more work to do to secure America. We will continue to work with our friends and allies around the world to aggressively pursue the terrorists and the foreign fighters in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere. See, I don't believe you can talk sense to these people. I do not believe you can negotiate with them. I know we must engage these enemies around the world so we do not have to face them here at home.

We will lead the world with confidence and moral clarity. We've put together a great coalition. There's over 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I appreciate the sacrifice of the moms and dads from those countries who've joined with the sacrifices of the moms and dads of our countries, to have their loved ones overseas securing freedom and peace. It's a great contribution that these countries have made. I'll continue to work with those alliances. But I'll assure you, I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

We'll keep our commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq. It's important we do so. These countries are becoming free countries, peaceful countries. Do you realize over 9 million people have registered to vote in Afghanistan? It's an amazing thought, you know? Three-and-a-half years ago, they were run by the Taliban. They pulled women into the public square to whip them. Today, women are getting ready to vote. They're headed toward freedom. Iraq is going to head toward

free elections. They got leaders who understand that if you listen to the aspirations of your people, the country will be better off. Our job is to provide a secure environment for those countries to head toward elections and, as well, train Iraqi and Afghan forces so they can defend themselves—to give them a chance to defeat those killers who are stopping the advance of freedom. We'll complete this mission as quickly as possible so our troops do not stay a day longer than necessary.

But in this campaign, you better watch what you say. The other day, my opponent said if he's elected the number of troops in Iraq will be significantly reduced within 6 months. See, that's a bad signal to send to the enemy. All they got to do is wait 6 months and 1 day. It's a bad signal to send to our troops, that your mission won't be completed. It's a bad signal to send to the Iraqi citizens who wonder whether or not America will keep its word. I believe when America speaks, we must mean what we say. We will complete the mission so Iraq and Afghanistan are free and peaceful countries.

Our commitment are kept by the men and women who wear the uniform. I'm proud of our military. I appreciate the veterans who are here for setting such a good example for those who wear our uniforms. I met Specialist Wayne Trimbell, behind the stage here. He's from the 724th Engineering Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard. He served our country in Iraq. He was telling me how he built bridges and roads and installed electricity. He said, "It made me recognize the things America takes for granted. I'm proud to say I served my country." I'm proud he served his country too. I know the decency and courage of those who wear our uniform. The cause of freedom and peace is in really good hands.

And we got to make sure our military has everything they need to complete the mission. Our Federal Government owes them the best pay, the best training, the best equipment, and the best possible support. I have done my duty as the Commander in Chief to support our troops. As a matter of fact, last September, I went to the Congress and asked for supplemental funding. I asked Congress to spend money for spare parts and

body armor and fuel. And we got great support in the halls of Congress. Matter of fact, that support was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the supplemental funding to support our troops in combat, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. When asked about why, he said, well, he actually did vote for the \$87 billion right before he voted against it. [Laughter] I don't think people talk like that here. He went on to say, when pressed, that he was proud of his vote, and then he said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

We've had the largest increases in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President. Military pay has gone up by 21 percent since I've been the President. The housing conditions are better for those who wear our uniform. Today I'm going to announce a new proposal to help our men and women activated for duty in the National Guard and Reserves. These brave Americans put their jobs on hold and leave their family behind when we called. Yet, under current rules, their education benefits don't reflect the high value of service we place on their time and duty. My proposal will help correct that by substantially increasing monthly education benefits for all Guard members and reservists on active duty for more than 90 consecutive days.

As well, we'll help our children of military families meet the challenges of a life on the move. People are going from base to base, and these moves often conflict with school rules from State to State. So we're going to put out grant money to help States ease the burden so it's more seamless for families to go from one State to the next, so their education—their kids get a great education. What I'm telling you is, we'll continue to stand side by side with those who wear the uniform and the family members of those who wear the uniform.

In the long run, our security is not guaranteed by force alone. We will work to change the conditions that give rise to terror, poverty, and hopelessness and resentment. You see, a free and peaceful Iraq and a free and

peaceful Afghanistan will be powerful examples in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom. Freedom—free countries do not export terror. Free countries do not stifle the dreams of their citizens.

I know we've got a mom here whose son is overseas. I want to tell you, your son is serving during historic times. By serving the cause of liberty, we're helping others realize their dreams, and we're making America more secure. By serving the cause of liberty, we're spreading peace. By serving the cause of liberty, we're serving the deepest ideals of our own country. Americans understand freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world. Thank you for your son's service.

We'll do more to protect our country because there's enemies still out there who hate us. It's a reality of the times we're in. My opponent says—and this is a difference of opinion—I think you're going to find there's a lot of differences of opinion in this campaign—[laughter]—he says that going to war with the terrorists is actually improving their recruiting efforts. I think the logic—I know the logic is upside-down. It shows a misunderstanding of the nature of these people. See, during the 1990s, these killers and terrorists were recruiting and training for war with us, long before we went to war with them. They don't need an excuse for their hatred. It's wrong to blame America for anger and the evil of these killers. We don't create terrorists by fighting back; you defeat the terrorists by fighting back.

We've started the hard process of reform in Washington. I emphasize "hard process." We've created the new Department of Homeland Security. There's a lot of good people working hard at the Federal, State, and local level to protect you and the citizens, and I appreciate their hard work. Listen, the PATRIOT Act is a vital tool for our law enforcement to be able to find these terrorists before they attack again. Our FBI agents are working overtime. We're sharing information better than ever before. We'll continue to work to make sure our intelligence gathering is the best in the world so we can better protect the homeland, and we'll continue to push for reforms in Washington.

But it's not enough to advocate reform. You got to get the job done. That's what this campaign is really all about. When it comes to reforming schools to provide excellent education for every child, we're getting the job done. When it comes to available and affordable health care, we're getting the job done. When it comes to overcoming the obstacles to our economy and creating jobs, we're getting the job done. When it comes to securing America and spreading freedom and peace, we're getting the job done. When it comes to electing a President, put somebody back in office who can get the job done.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. We're living in exciting times, and these are times of change, and change can be unsettling. And one way for Government to help people during times of change is to make sure there's a lifetime of learning for workers at our community college systems. Another way to help is to promote an ownership society. See, we want people owning and managing their own health care accounts, where if they change jobs it goes with them from job to job.

I'm worried about our Social Security system. I'm not worried about it for baby boomers like me. There's—the system is solvent. But if you're a younger worker, I think it's important that you be allowed to have your own personal savings account that you can carry with you throughout your life, to pass generation to generation.

In changing times, I love the idea of more and more Americans owning their own home. Today, the homeownership rate is the highest it's ever been in our Nation's history. Think about this: More and more of our citizens are opening up their door saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." I like the idea that more and more people in America are owning their own business. We'll continue to work for an ownership society in America. We understand that when you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of our country.

And during these changing times, though, there's some things that won't change: our belief in liberty and opportunity and the non-negotiable demands of human dignity; the

values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity; the institutions that give us direction and purpose, our families, our schools, and our religious congregations. We stand for institutions like marriage and family which are the foundations of our society. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We stand for judges who will faithfully interpret the law instead of legislating from the bench.

We stand for a culture of responsibility. Listen, the culture of this country is changing from one that has said, "If it feels good, do it," and "If you got a problem, blame somebody else," to a culture in which each of us understands we are responsible for the decisions we make in life. If you're fortunate enough to be a mother or a father, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're worried about the quality of education in this community, you're responsible for doing something about it. You're responsible for supporting your teachers and your school board members and supporting the schools. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you are responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in a responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I'm running for 4 more years to continue to rally the armies of compassion which exist all across our country. I understand the limitations of Government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That happens when a loving soul steps up and says, "What can I do for you? How can I help you? I love you. Can I make a difference in your life?"

Listen, there are thousands of people all across the country serving this Nation by helping somebody who hurts. To rally the armies of compassion means to call upon our citizens to continue hearing a call, because I understand we can change America one heart, one soul, and once conscience at a time.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is

expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time where we need firm resolve. This is a time where we need clear vision. This is a time where we need steadfast belief in the values that make this country a great country.

You know, I'll never forget the day when one era ended and another began, and I know you won't either. I was in the ruins of the Twin Towers on September the 14th, 2001. I clearly remember the workers in hardhats screaming at me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking people's hands and thanking them, looking in a guy's eyes; they were bloodshot. He was tired and worn out. He'd been looking for a buddy in the rubble. He said, "Do not let me down."

See, he took that day personally. Everybody searching in the rubble took it personally. You took it personally, and so did I. I have a duty that goes on. I wake up every day thinking about how best to protect this country. I will never relent in chasing down the enemy and securing America, whatever it takes.

We've come through a lot together. We've come through a lot together. We've done a lot of hard work. We're making a difference. During the next 4 years, we'll spread ownership and opportunity throughout every corner of America. We'll pass the enduring values of our country on to a younger generation. We'll lead the cause of freedom and work to spread the peace.

When I campaigned in Wisconsin 4 years ago, I said, if you give me the high honor of holding this office, I would uphold the dignity and honor of the Presidency. And with your help and with your hard work, I will do so for 4 more years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. at the Kell Container Corp. In his remarks, he referred to John Kell, president, and Tom Kell, chief executive officer, Kell Container Corp.; Wisconsin State Treasurer Jack C. Voight; Mayor Doug Sandvick of Chippewa Falls, WI; Dale Schultz, candidate for Congress in Wisconsin's Third Congressional District; Paul and Morgan Hamm, who won silver medals as members of the U.S. men's gymnastics team at the Olympics in Athens, Greece, on August 16; Col. Muammar Abu

Minyar al-Qadhafi, leader of Libya; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the Kansas City Chiefs Training Camp in River Falls, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

Carl D. Peterson. Thank you so much for being here. It's great to have you. Thanks for taking your time. I know you know our head coach well.

The President. I do know Dick. Thanks. Thanks for letting me come by and say hi. I appreciate you coming out to say hello. I'm in the neighborhood. [Laughter] I'm shaking hands. But I wish you all the best this season.

I particularly want to thank the players who, in the off-season or during the season, are helping people who hurt. I know you've got a big platform, and you can make a difference in people's lives. The fact that you can help somebody who is in need is a great contribution. It's one thing to be a star on the field; it's another thing to be a star off the field. I know a lot of you are.

Head Coach Dick Vermeil. These guys are great guys.

Mr. Peterson. We're very proud of this guy's father—Priest Holmes's dad re-upped, and he's in Iraq right now. And our prayers and thoughts are with him. And we got to see Priest set the NFL record at Arrowhead last year, 27 touchdowns.

The President. I remember when I was the Governor of Texas—[laughter]—I'm trying to keep his taxes low. [Laughter]

Mr. Peterson. Everybody here wants you to continue to do the same thing, believe me.

The President. Good luck to you all. Let me walk around and shake some hands.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:21 p.m. at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Carl D. Peterson, president, general manager, and chief executive officer, Kansas City Chiefs, referred to running back Priest Holmes. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion in Hudson, Wisconsin

August 18, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you all. That's what I'm here to tell you. I'm ready to go. There's more work to be done. I'm here asking for 4 more years.

Thank you all for coming. I think we've got a pretty interesting way to explain why I'm running for President again today. What I thought I would do is spend some time talking about some issues with some of our fellow citizens here, who will help explain why I make decisions the way I do. Then if we've got time, I'd like to answer some questions from you. Then I've got to go across the river—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. They vote too. [Laughter] I want to thank you all for coming. I really am out asking for the vote. I think it's really important to travel the States that are key States and ask people—and tell people why you're running. And that's what I'm doing today in your great State. You know, we came close last time in Wisconsin. This time we're going to win it.

I want to thank you all for your help. Listen, I know there's some people here who volunteer for the campaign, and I want—let me tell you what that means. It means signs. It means making phone calls. It means encouraging people to register to vote.

You know, I like to tell people an interesting story about Afghanistan, and I'll talk about that a little more later on, but there was some doubt in people's minds as to whether or not, once free, the Afghan people would participate in democracy, particularly after the Taliban drug some people off one of the buses—women—off the buses and executed them because they happened to be holding voter registration cards. Today in that country, 3½ years after being brutalized by the Taliban, over 9 million people have registered to vote. See, they are—it's a great statistic, isn't it?